



Camp Douglas News

Committed to the Preservation of Chicago History



Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation

Chicago, Illinois

Winter 2014

Volume 5, Issue 4

Project Phases:

Awareness and Support:
2010-2014

Site Planning: 2014-2015

Archaeological Investigation:
2012-2013-2014-2015

Construction: 2015-2016

*Special Thanks to
Volunteers*

The following individuals volunteered for the Fall 2014 Archaeological excavation: Margaret Baker, Kailey Bednarek, Hunter Bracisewski, Mary Brennan, Chris Brink, Tera Dobbs, John Drury, Wayne Etheridge, Collen Fahey, Tom Gorman, Hannah Gottschalk, Hannah Gunning, Nichole Grinberg, Jackie Hackett, Will Ippen, Jessica Kalvig, Linda Keller, Linda Klutznick, Laura Laudadio, Kirsten Lopez, Jackie Mann, Maggie McClain, Brian Mcdevitt, Mary Moltier, Greg Mycio, Adrielle Marcisia, Brandy Norton, Devin O'brien, Dana Renninger, Roberto Robaina, Kelly Schmidt, John Tariguchi, Emily Wagner, Kelsey Weir, Kristen Wesimantle, Dave Whitakker, Marget Willis, Monserrat Wisdom, Phoebe Yates, and Prologue High School Students.

Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation—Latest News

Historic Marker Dedication

Members of the Sons of Union Veterans of the Civil War and Sons of the Confederacy acted as honor guard for the unveiling are shown at the marker.

Russell Lewis, President, Illinois State Historical Society and David Keller, CDRF, led the ceremony that included the unveiling by Chicago Second Ward Alderman, Bob Fioretti and Fourth Ward representative Prentice Butler. The Chicago Military Academy-Bronzeville provided the color guard. Nancy Jackson, President, Prologue Inc., owner of the property where the marker was erected (former Griffin Funeral Home), offered the welcome to the some seventy-five guests who attended.



Museum Location

The Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation and Prologue, Inc. have reached an agreement in principle to locate the Camp Douglas Museum on the grounds of the former

Griffin Funeral Home.

The museum will be part of a museum campus that will include other exhibits important to the Bronzeville Community.

Prologue operates alternate high schools in Chicago and has been a partner with CDRF on a number of educational programs.

It is anticipated that a definitive agreement will be in place by year-end. At that time CDRF will begin a fund raising campaign to obtain \$2.5 million to construct, equip, and operate the museum.

Civil War Artifacts Found

On October 21, 2014 a one-inch high letter "B" (top-right) was discovered at the archaeological excavation conducted at John J. Pershing Magnet School by Dr. Michael Gregory's De Paul University volunteer crew. Volunteers Laura Laudadio and Greg Mycio discovered the badge the last day of the excavation.

It is believed that this is the first Civil War military artifact discovered in Chicago in nearly 100 years.

The "B" is a cap badge, representing a Civil War company or battery and was worn by Union soldiers. The brass letter, hollow on the back with a pin soldered to attach to the top of the kepi, was typical of items issued by the Union Army beginning in 1863. Confederate soldiers infrequently wore these badges, often taken from dead or captured Union soldiers. The badge was authenticated by archivists at the Museum of the Confederacy, Kenosha Civil War Museum, and Civil War cap expert Mike McAfee.



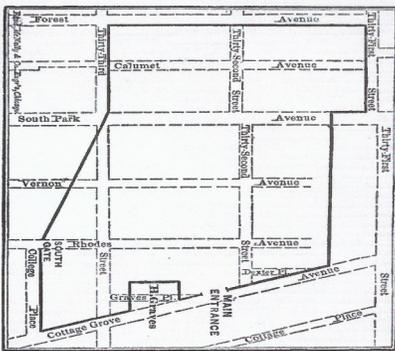
The "Brown Face Reed Pipe" (bottom-left was discovered at the same level as the cap insignia. According to the Museum of the Confederacy these pipes were commonly used by Confederate soldiers during the Civil War and this pipe is similar to pipes in their collection. The MOC confirmed that the pipe was from the Civil War era and likely from Camp Douglas.

The letter and pipe, along with period window glass and nails, confirm that the area of the excavation, west of King Drive, was Prisoners Square of Camp Douglas.

These discoveries have led the Foundation and De Paul University to plan additional excavations on the camp site. De Paul, along with the Kenosha Civil War Museum, will conduct ground penetrating radar tests of additional areas of the camp. A primary goal will be to locate the stockade fencing of the camp. Identification of this feature will allow more precise placement of camp

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CAMP DOUGLAS, 1864-5.

Map prepared by William Bross for a paper read before the Chicago Historical Society, June 18, 1878

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What They are Saying About The Story of Camp Douglas

The Story of Camp Douglas, Chicago's Forgotten Civil War Prison, written by CDRF Managing Director, David Keller, is scheduled for release by History Press early in spring 2015. It is a study of Camp Douglas and other Civil War prisons.

Early reviews of the book :

"*The Story of Camp Douglas* brings to life the realities of life and death during the Civil War. It is a wonderful contribution to POW history in general and Civil War studies in particular."

Robert Doyle, PhD. *The Enemy in our Hands*

"The book before you is an attempt to cut through both the indifference and the invective that have shadowed our understanding of this important chapter of Civil War history. It is the most comprehensive study to date of the camp's history and a thoughtful effort to dispassionately place it in the larger context of the awful war that divided our nation."

Theodore Karamanski. *Rally 'Round the Flag*

Recollections-Letters, Diaries and Journals

Editor's Note: This section is devoted to letters, diaries, and journals of Civil War veterans. Often considered the best source of contemporaneous information on the war, readers must be cautioned that this material represents individual experiences and feelings. Letters often reflected what the writer thought the recipient wanted to hear. In addition, many of the journals were written well after the war and include the frailties of age and time. Grammatical and spelling errors have not been corrected in quotes

Free Time at Camp Douglas

Prisoners at Camp Douglas who were not cooks, clerks, nurses, or assigned fatigue duties had almost eight hours of free time daily.

Prisoner Curtis

Burke reported that the *Chicago Tribune* and *Chicago Post* newspapers were available. Neither the southern leaning *Chicago Times* nor any Southern papers were sold by the sutlers or newsstands in the camp.

Burke also noted that artisans who produced "gutta-percha rings, breastplates, etc. ornamenting them with fancy sets of gold, silver, and pearl. There were about thirty ring makers in camp." He also spoke of artisans, with gold and silver being very much in demand by Union officers and soldiers. (See *Camp Douglas News*-Summer 2014).

John Copley wrote in his prison diary of shoe cobblers, watch "tinkers," and tailors who plied their trades at Camp Douglas. The handy work of camp artisans was noted, "I saw two toys out on end of a barrack below here that were worked by the wind, representing a negro and a white man striking at each other with paddles, and the harder the wind blows the faster they strike.

William Huff spent much of his time as a prisoner as an artist or playing his guitar. He complained, "It is hard to get strings so I use my pencil more than my music. Engraving is almost played out so it is rather difficult to keep in tobacco." Huff recounted,



"One of the features of Camp Douglas is the brokers who deal in almost everything. They buy and sell Confederate money, greenbacks, sutler's tickets. Gambling of every description is carried on here."

In Prisoner Square a faro bank was reported in "full operation" on which the banker had amassed a fortune of \$150,000 in Confederate currency.

Burke, in April 1864, commented on gamblers at the camp. "The Yanks made the gamblers at the sutler store scatter and piled up their home made tables in the center of the square at the lumber pile. The gamblers seem to have been effectually scattered as there is no tables in operation today."

Among the additional activities of prisoners were: "Others revived games of childhood, and could be seen busily engaged in playing leap frog, or marbles, with an earnestness worthy of the happiest ten-year-old." Burke recounted, "The prisoners amusing themselves out of doors running, jumping, flying kites and playing ball." Other diary entries support that prisoners engaged in board games, cards, checkers, sporting events, and other athletic activities in the camp. There appear to have been little interference with these activities by the prison authorities.

This material was taken from the soon to be published *The Story of Camp Douglas, Chicago's Forgotten Civil War Prison* by David Keller.

Forgotten Camp Douglas

Washington Post,
September 12, 2014

Civil War experts weigh in on what story lines get overlooked .

Waite Rawls
Co-chief executive, the American Civil War Museum.

Chicago's POW camp

"Many people may have heard of Andersonville, the Georgia camp where thousands of Union soldiers died. But very few know of Camp Douglas, a prisoner of war camp in Chicago where 4,500 Confederate soldiers died, 17 percent of all those who entered the gates. That is almost 2 percent of all Confed-



erate deaths in the entire war and more than the death toll at Antietam.

I lived in Chicago for 15 years and was surprised that almost no one knows of this record, as they all assume that the Civil War happened hundreds of miles away. And even fewer

know, as they walk their dogs or play softball in Lincoln Park, that hundreds of Confederate soldiers lie beneath their feet, in a swamp that served as a paupers' cemetery until it was covered over with the detritus from the Great Chicago Fire in 1871."

Waite Rawls has been an important supporter and contributor to the Camp Douglas Restoration Foundation.